

GCCNews

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Learning the language of art

A look at what makes GCC's art program so successful

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Speaking the same language

As new technologies emerge, the art faculty stress a common vocabulary

Ask the art faculty what distinguishes their department and you'll get a host of answers. Risk-taking. High standards. The electronic media. Weekly meetings, and developing a visual vocabulary. In fact, the art department's reputation as one of the finest foundation programs in the Northeast is due in part to all of these qualities. Underlying them all is the faculty's belief in each other, in their students, and in the process of making art.

Here, they answer the question themselves in more detail:

Photographer Tom Young: One of the things that I like about teaching at GCC that makes us different from most art departments is the autonomy we have. It has allowed us to continue to work as artists, and make changes in the curriculum—both *how* we teach and *what* we teach. We have had good strong leadership at both the division and college-wide level that has given us the right to make up our own minds about where we want to go and what we want to do.



Thomas Young
B.A., Goddard College
M.A., Rhode Island School of Design
Years at GCC: 14

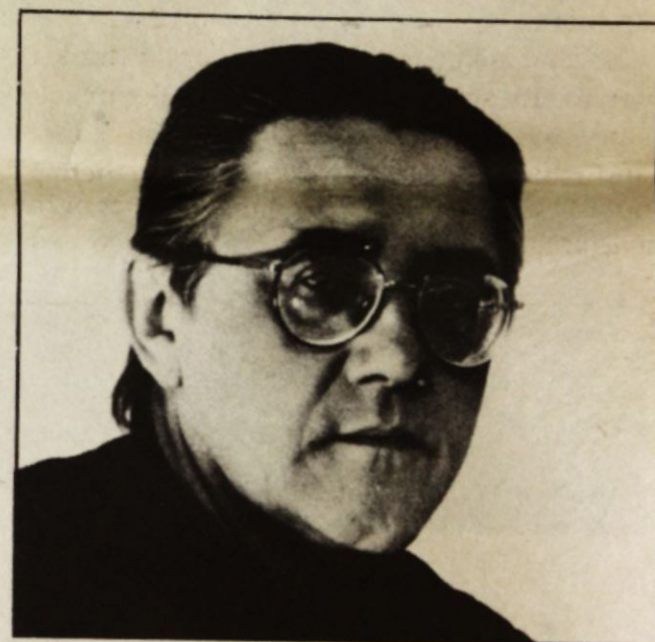
I also think the closeness of the department makes a difference in how we make things happen. It took two or three years to work together to bring Tom Boisvert in from another area (media communication, which combined with art in 1991) to fit in to an art department, and his role now is as significant to our department as the rest of us who have gone through the traditional arts. I think art, graphic design and media are a unique trio more closely associated with professional schools.

Painter and Program Coordinator Budge Hyde: I think the department on a whole functions well for a variety of reasons, one of which is that historically we have been in touch with each other as far as what goes on in the studio classroom. We have weekly meetings and it is a time when we have real dialogue.

I think partly why we are as successful as we are in the studio classroom is that although we all realize we are at a community college we set our sights really high. I think that at times myself and others in the department feel like we are teaching at a level of graduate students in that I ask my students what they think. We try to take them high and above where they begin and push the work in that direction. What I think happens at a community college and at many colleges around the country is there is a tracking that happens, that 'we are this kind of school' instead of 'this kind of school' so the work should look a certain way. That does not happen here.

Tom Young: I came to GCC from a different kind of school, Rhode Island School of Design, and I was amazed at how the level of work did not seem that different. I think it comes from aiming your sights really high, and challenging students to step out of the model that they live in and to push it further. We have long discussions about how we do that and what the consequences are.

Graphic artist John Bross: One of the things that I have noticed over the years is that we have a great variety of students as far as age and background are concerned. A lot of students come in here without clear-cut goals. What surprises me is where they start and the peak they reach in the short period of time. For some students it is almost a radical change not only in art but in their intellectual development in other courses as well.

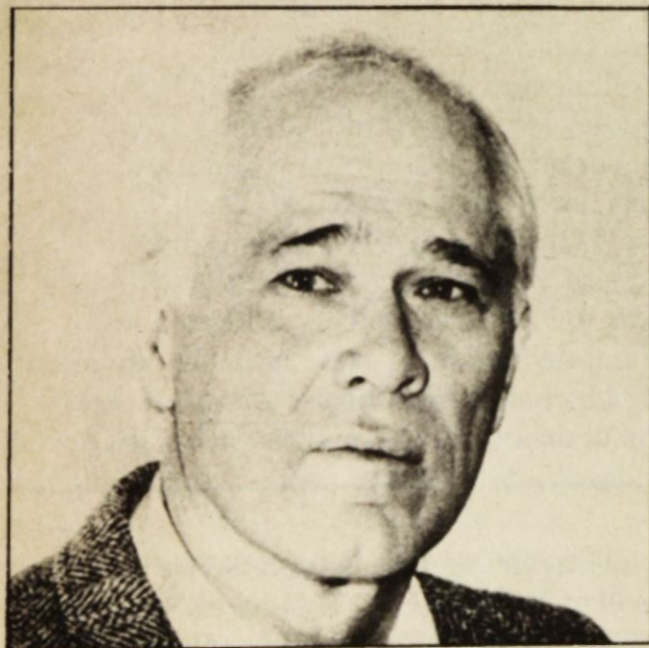


John Bross
B.S., M.S., Indiana University
M.F.A., University of Iowa
Years at GCC: 14

The art department for some—maybe a lot—of students is important because it demands that they question something. Those demands then get transferred to other areas of study; students realize they have to start asking more questions, reading more books. Remember, we have open admission. Someone can just walk in, no portfolio, no SAT scores; we do not have committees that select students. I really feel with students it's not so much where they start but where they wind up, where we took them.

Budge Hyde: We talk a great deal about the problem-solving process, about developing a visual vocabulary, a language that is common to all of us, as opposed to simply making a photograph or making a drawing. It allows a person to apply logical thinking in other areas and gives them options within the art department. Even if they don't stay in art they have the opportunity to have gone through a thinking process or problem-solving development coupled with a visual response—a visual language as oppose to a written language. Which is applicable to other disciplines at the college. It is not a language about how to make a box or how to make a sculpture or a drawing or a painting. It is interesting because visual language is dismissed as an art area by most faculty and colleagues within the regular disciplines. The difference is, for instance, the work hanging on the walls. Many people see it and comment, 'Why is that up there? It's not finished.' It is *not* finished; we use the wall to view work in progress. It's relevant to that visual language—it's no different than an English teacher putting the first drafts of students' English papers up there.

That is key to what we do and I think key to any strong program. We ask our students to take real risks in what they feel and what they do. We try and teach them not to be afraid to fail. Failing is a part of the learning process.



T. Budge Hyde
B.F.A., University of Utah
M.F.A., University of Cincinnati
Years at GCC: 21

Tom Young: That is what we are doing now by expanding the department with this major expansion in electronic media. In the past we had a very strong department with what we did and I think we are taking a big

'We're in a constant editing process'

The art department's current configuration of five majors (fine arts, graphic design, media, liberal arts/art option and applied commercial photography) was established last year with the merger of the college's media communication program with the traditional arts, a move that took several years of planning. Why the change? "We're in a constant editing process," says program coordinator Budge Hyde. "You see more images in a single *Sunday New York Times* than people did in their entire lifetime 150 years ago."

The speed at which the tools for making art are changing has made it necessary for the art department to open up its thinking to accommodate them. At GCC, this has resulted in a shift in emphasis from the products of art to the process; to developing a common visual language that can be used regardless of the medium. The advent of technologies like computers "is like picking up a piece of charcoal," says Hyde. "The visual language is the same in every course, but the tools change. We're saying, 'I'm going to take this and use it from a design and artistic viewpoint.'

Professor Tom Boisvert, who officially joined the art department in September 1991 from what had been a separate media communication program, agrees. "We used to produce television programs for broadcast. Now we deal far more with visual issues in the medium. We've placed more of an emphasis on aesthetic rather than communication issues (and they are not mutually exclusive). We're concerned with how to produce images, and in that process one learns about how to use the particular technology."

Instead of just teaching traditional fine arts foundation courses like painting, drawing and printmaking, the art department now stresses three broad areas that create this common vocabulary. The initial emphasis is on developing problem-solving skills and understanding the process of art. The second part in the art student's development is the liberal arts, for content and subject matter. The third piece is exposure to the electronic media "because we're in the information age," says Hyde.

gamble and a big risk and really changing in a fundamental way the way we are perceiving media right now and integrating it into our program. That is the kind of risk that Tom (Boisvert) and I are teaching right now in advanced media—we began that class by saying 'this is an experiment, we are not sure what is going to happen,' and I think they saw us as very vulnerable during that risk-taking and I think it might open the door for them also to take some risks.

Painter Penne Krol: That needs three underlines under it! I think our students come to accept failure as part of the process and all it means is that something did not happen the way they intended and so it is either an opportunity for something else to happen or they should try something else. It does not carry that heavy burden that it used to. They are more able to shrug it off when they think of it as process and that's something they carry out for the rest of their lives, which is very helpful.

Tom Young: What we do in the studio is make the competency level almost a foundation level. I know I and the rest of us expect so much more from students than just being competent with the materials; they must also think about what they are saying and how they are saying it. The population is quite

diverse and in that mixture we get strong voices that are coming out in the work. I would like to believe that a part of our success is the students themselves. They are coming from diverse backgrounds and have been through a lot, and they are out there working and struggling and have a lot of things to talk about.

Continued on next page



Penne Krol
A.A., Greenfield Community College — B.A., Smith College
M.F.A., University of Massachusetts
Years at GCC: 9

Budge Hyde: It's easy to go back and teach traditional art. It's not so easy to mix in what is happening in 1993 or what is going to happen in 1995. We try to do that. We need to go back and teach the Renaissance, but it is not alive today. You need the traditional connection, but that is not where it is now. Raphael would not be a draftsman if he was living today.

We have integrated art with media (electronic media and video), and I think those courses feed into foundation studio areas like painting and photography. I think what separates us from other schools is that be they large or small they have separate departments, a painting department, sculpture department, ceramics, video, and so on. I think that those departments isolate themselves and isolate students. I think the cross-current activities and the material media students interact with here gets translated in their other classrooms. The faculty is accepting of it if someone in drawing wants to do something on a computer or video. They are encouraged, so there is a mix happening.

I feel that the way we are handling the impact of the electronic video and media is that we are looking ten years down the road at such questions as, 'where is art going to be?' and 'what kind of tools will art be working with?' We have to make those connections which we do but simultaneously adapt to the media.

Electronic artist Tom Boisvert: If I can take a look at what happens to students from a naive perspective, as a newcomer to the art department and the art program in general, each student takes essentially the same foundation courses. They are all taking the same courses except for some upper level



Thomas Boisvert
B.S., University of Maine at Portland-Gorham
M.Ed., Boston University
Years at GCC: 15



Student, faculty work on exhibit

The Art, Graphic Design and Media Department's Annual Student Art Exhibition is open in the South Gallery now through Friday, May 7. The shows features the work of nearly 150 students, including second-year art student Daryl Beck of Greenfield, whose photograph, "Hand with Cigarette," is pictured above. A scene from last year's opening reception (this year's was April 15) is on our cover.

The gallery is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The exhibition is funded by the Student Senate.

If you hurry, there's still time to take in a show featuring the faculty at the Hampden Gallery at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The show,

which began on March 29, ends Friday, April 23.

Contributing artists are T. Budge Hyde (oil on canvas); John Bross (oil on canvas); Tom Young (assembled silver prints); Ron W. Kim (oil on wood); Penne Krol (acrylic on canvas); Keith Hollingworth (acrylic on canvas); Peter Dudley (wood constructions); John Willis (silver prints); Justin West (video); and Lisa Beernsten (oil on wood panel).

Hampden Gallery is open 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday, and Sundays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The gallery is located in Hampden Student Center in the Southwest Residential Area of the university, at the top of the horseshoe on University Drive.

studio courses. In one way I can look at it as everyone is coming out doing the same thing; everybody is coming out doing the same field. But the reality is that the department encourages students to find their own way, to try to experiment, and people grow in radically different ways. I'm just really enthused to look at the students who come through my own classes and to look at the environment that is created that allows students to take basic instructions or some problems or outline of directions and work with those. It is a marvelous environment

which again has been supported by our high level of camaraderie. There are some marvelous things going on.

John Bross: It's very integrated for us and our students. If you really look at other art schools you will find departments such as graphic design, printmaking and painting, and they'll take students in their second year and make them declare a major that isolates them in that area and students have a hard time going from one area to another. It is very difficult for students, I think, because they want to take a variety of courses but the

Life beyond GCC: art students excel in a range of careers

The best evidence of a program's success is how its students fare after they leave the college. Here is just a small sampling of where GCC's art students have gone:

- David Coulter graduated in graphic design and transferred to Rhode Island School of Design, where he earned his bachelor of fine arts degree. He now runs his own design studio in Providence.

- Doug Farrick received a master of fine arts degree from Pratt Institute in painting.

- Peter Michael Kennedy graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology and is a curator at Pyramid Arts Center in Rochester, NY.

- Kathleen Powell transferred to Smith College.

- Keith Clark earned his bachelor's degree from Syracuse University and now works for WGBY, Channel 57 in Springfield, where he won an Iris Award from the National Association of Television Program Executives in 1992 for his work on the comedy program *Please Stand By II: The Wrath of Bob*.

- Donna Taylor is now a photography assistant at Amherst College.

- David Torcoletti earned a BFA degree from Ohio University in photography and a master's degree from the

Milton Avery School of Art. He now teaches photography at Northfield-Mt. Herman School.

- Susan McKenna is in a doctorate program at the University of Massachusetts in communications after having earned a master of fine arts degree in photography.

- Sharyn Altshuler earned a BFA degree at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and is currently studying for her master of fine arts degree at Yale University in photography.

- Andrew Snyder transferred to the Art Institute of Chicago.

- Jill Morrison transferred to the Art Institute of Chicago.

- Patti Fitzmaurice is studying for her MFA degree from the University of Michigan in photography.

- John McLaughlin earned his BFA degree from the Rhode Island School of Design and is now a photography illustrator for children's books.

- Bill Ledger graduated from Massachusetts College of Art with a BFA degree in photography and has worked for the Associated Press as well as doing documentary photography. Currently, he is helping to start "Insights," a program to teach photography to children in Brattleboro, VT.

department won't let them.

Penne Krol: For a lot of our students it is taking an active role in their education rather than a passive one. I think all the way through school they were trained to sit and listen and regurgitate what they learned and they had to do it. Here, they cannot just watch. They have to participate, they become active seekers and learn to educate

themselves and then they start reaching out to other areas and those boxes that separate—first things like graphic design and photography as being separate from each other—and then breaking things down even further and they start reaching out to liberal arts and humanities in order to be more responsible for their own education.

LETTERS



Walter M. Taylor, president from 1962 to 1964.

Remembering Walt Taylor

Dear President Sloan:

Your Spring 1993 *GCCNews* has an item of nostalgic interest. Pictures of all former presidents of the college were shown. The face of Walt Taylor brought forth a flood of memories. He organized the college and got it started. He was a man with a great curiosity and energy. He seemed to know something about everything.

The college used several areas in the First United Methodist Church. I moved to Greenfield in 1962 and was the pastor of that church. One day Walt called and asked me to come over and speak to an assembly of "my tenants". After I spoke Walt followed me home and said I could help him get the college off the ground. After some discussion I said I would teach a couple of courses in psychology until they could get a Ph.D. in the field. I began teaching in February of 1963, just 30 years ago now. I learned a lot. The work load grew along with the college. I was already working full-time and more, so it was a relief when they obtained the services of a Ph.D. I taught through ten semesters.

Walt Taylor was a worker. He also loved to play tennis and was a very good bridge player.

Jane Abbott is on your staff now and still a charming young woman. She was in one of my classes.

The Rev. James R. Duncan
Greenfield



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GCCNews is written and edited by Russell Powell, director of public relations, with assistance from Jodi Dwyer and Ruth Todrin. Photographs are by Dennis Koonz unless otherwise noted.

NOTES FROM THE SEMESTER

Greenfield Community College has been awarded a **\$60,000 grant** from the state Department of Education to **promote Tech Prep programs** throughout the state.

Tech Prep is a collaborative program of study that links the last two years of high school with two years of postsecondary education resulting in a certificate or two-year degree in an occupational field. There are 11 consortia in the state funded by the federal Perkins Act to develop Tech Prep programs. GCC is a member of TechPrep West, a consortium of seven vocational technical schools, one comprehensive high school and three community colleges in western Massachusetts.

The purpose of the grant, says Charlotte Rahaim, director of Tech Prep programs at GCC, is to develop a manual of "best Tech Prep practices" for state service providers and other interested parties; Tech Prep brochures for parents, students, business and industry leaders, teachers, guidance counselors and policy makers; and a Tech Prep promotional video; and to plan and implement a state-wide conference on Tech Prep at GCC in September.

GCC currently has Tech Prep agreements in computer information systems and early childhood education with Franklin County Technical School in Turners Falls, and in production management technology with Smith Vocational High School in Northampton.

Puerto Rican Writers at Home in the USA (Open Hand Publishing), an anthology edited by Faythe Turner, professor of English, **has been selected by the New York Public Library** for the "1993 Books for the Teen Age". This annual list has been published since 1929 and selects the best of the previous year's publishing for teenagers.

The anthology brings together the works of 18 contemporary Puerto Rican writers for the first time in one volume. A celebration to honor the authors of the books selected for the "1993 Books for the Teen Age" list was held in the Nathan Straus Young Adult Library in New York City March 13.



The **MacLeish Reading Room** in the library is now open every **Tuesday and Wednesday** from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and by appointment. This milestone in the history of the MacLeish Collection at the college closely follows another one—the completion of the work of Pegge Howland, curator, cataloguing both parts of the collection.

In 1989, Howland received a two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to recatalog the collection and make it fully accessible for study and research. Work began on the project in September 1990 and was completed this January. As a result, the collection can now be accessed through two large bibliographic databases (OCLC and RLIN); two card catalogues (one in the GCC Library and one in the MacLeish Room); and through the two-volume *Descriptive Catalogue of the Archibald MacLeish Collection*.

The MacLeish Collection is composed of two different sections. One is MacLeish's personal library of poetry and prose by authors he liked, those who influenced him, or those who were influenced by him. It contains 1629 catalogued items: four music scores; 122 periodical issues, and 1503 books. More than 130 have handwritten annotations by MacLeish, and 180 are inscribed and signed by their authors. In addition, more than 40 of the books contain holographic inserts, such as letters or manuscripts.

The other section is the Friends' Collection, which contains 11,147 catalogued items by and about MacLeish, including 445 books, 196 periodical issues, 969 letters and manuscripts, and 9,537 non-print items, including artifacts and memorabilia.

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The **MacLeish Prize in the Humanities** has been established by the Friends of the Archibald MacLeish Collection to recognize and reward outstanding student performance.

The MacLeish Prize will be given annually. The amount of the award will vary according to the availability of funds and the number of awards made. This year, the Friends is offering two prizes of \$250 each, one in English and one in art.

This year's winners and their faculty sponsors will be the guests of honor at the annual meeting of the Friends on Thursday, May 6, where the awards will be made.

The Archibald MacLeish Collection—the only one in the world devoted solely to

the purpose of advancing the knowledge and understanding of the Pulitzer Prize-winning statesman and poet, his works, his life, and his times—was established at Greenfield Community College in 1974 by a group of faculty and staff. MacLeish supported the collection by offering books and manuscripts to help get it started. The Collection was the recipient of a major gift from the MacLeish family in 1984 when they donated nearly 2,000 items to the collection, including his personal library.

Greenfield Community College has been selected as one of 15 colleges nationwide to participate in the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) project, **"Improving Foreign Language Education at Community Colleges"**. The project is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and is being conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association.

As a participating institution, Greenfield Community College will benefit from the following foreign language education improvement activities:

- Participation in AACC's National Foreign Language Education Conference I in Washington, DC, held in March;
- Mentoring services before, during and for an eight-month period after the National Conference to assist the college in developing and implementing an action plan to improve foreign language education on campus; and
- Participation in AACC's National Foreign Language Education Conference II in San Antonio, TX, October 27.

The college will also receive the project's specially prepared newsletter, *Improving Foreign Language Education News*, and will share the national publicity generated by the project. The mentor chosen to work with GCC will also visit the campus at least once.

"We are thrilled to receive this recognition and support," said Associate Academic Dean Joan Ibish in announcing the award, "because this is an area in which we have really needed strengthening. We want GCC to become a model for innovative foreign language programs on a smaller scale."

A new option: environmental studies

Interdisciplinary program emphasizes ecological principles and effective group behavior

Beginning in September, the college will offer students a liberal arts option in environmental studies. The new associate of arts degree program builds on the existing human ecology program started by Professors Daniel LaRose and Gregory Vouros in 1980, but adds two new courses and combines existing ones in an integrated, coherent sequence. The program emphasizes ecological principles and effective group behavior, says LaRose, and combines several academic disciplines and hands-on experience.

GCC faculty have demonstrated a strong concern for the environment for some time. At about the same time that LaRose and Vouros began the human ecology program, the Outdoor Leadership Program began to incorporate environmental challenges into its curriculum. About three years ago, as part of the college's core curriculum review, LaRose and others argued for the need for environmental literacy for all students. The college's new mission statement drafted this winter includes specific language about promoting environmental awareness in students. The reason for this focus, says LaRose, is that for *all* students to live and work—not just those who will assume environmental jobs—in the 21st century, the present environmental crisis must be stabilized.

The new environmental studies option combines elements of the behavioral and the natural sciences "to develop an understanding of ecology and the use of science and technology in solving problems which are critical to our future," says LaRose, a GCC graduate. The option includes two new courses, "Environmental Economics" developed by Professor of Business and Economics Martha Field, and "Earth Experiences," developed by Lawrence Buell, professor of outdoor leadership. Other faculty who have worked on the program include geology professor Richard Little, biology professor Donald Oberacker and Peter Steve, professor of environmental science.

The new program creates an advising pathway for students interested in environmental careers, says LaRose. "Environmental Economics" will view the economic factors driving ecological problems. The course will examine the economic impact of environmental topics like pollution control, emerging businesses that offer ways to clean up the environment, and existing businesses that want to engage in environmentally sound practices (*see accompanying article*), what LaRose calls "the greening of American business." The "Earth Experiences" course will promote hands-on

experiential learning, with ecological activities in the field.

The program is a good start, but not an end in itself, says LaRose. He and his colleagues want to make sure that environmental awareness is not an addendum, but is integrated across the entire curriculum. "We're going to have to come to terms with how people live on the planet, with the consequences of technology and the need to adapt our lifestyles, change our values," he says. Whether it's ocean pollution or ozone depletion or habitat destruction, global warming or the loss of rain forest, "we need to become more conscious of the consequences of human behavior," LaRose says. To survive the current environmental crisis will first require "an understanding of the web-like nature of our relationships and the power of our interactions."

Environmental studies curriculum combines classroom work with experiential learning

The new liberal arts environmental studies option is a 60-credit program coordinated by Professors of Human Ecology Daniel LaRose and Gregory Vouros. In addition to a general core curriculum in English, humanities and natural sciences/mathematics and several electives, the program requires students to take the following:

- A behavioral science core consisting of three courses: "Human Ecology: Problems and Solutions," "Environmental Economics," and "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology".
- An experiential core. Students must either take "Applied Human Ecology: Project TEME" (Totally Enclosed Modular Environment—GCC's simulated space shuttle lab), or "Earth Experiences".
- Human ecology courses "Small Group Ecology: Project TEME Planning and Development," and "Small Group Ecology: Project TEME Implementation".

For more information about the program, contact the admissions office at 413-774-3131, extension 235, or LaRose or Vouros (extension 354).

Environmental seminars for business prove popular

The Division of Continuing Education offered a workshop, "Environmental Focus: Regulatory Overview for Small Businesses," on March 30. Co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the event was expected to draw about 15 people. Instead, 60 registered.

The half-day program included overviews of hazardous wastes and the Environmental Protection Agency's air program, stormwater regulations, plus information about both the Office of Technical Assistance and the Department of Environmental Protection. Speakers included officials from those two agencies and businessmen such as

Ed Jamro of Monsanto.

The workshop was so successful that the division of Continuing Education plans to sponsor more in the future. Topics will be announced at a later date. For more information, contact Tom Lewis at 774-3131, extension 278.

ALUMNI NEWS

Come on down and see Michael Milewski sometime

Michael Milewski, a 1975 graduate of GCC's human ecology program, transferred to the University of Massachusetts, where he graduated in 1977 from the Environmental Design Program.

Milewski has been the assistant archivist at UMass for the past 12 years, and he was featured in an article in *The New York Times* for his work with documents that were retrieved from a time capsule that had been planted under a pine tree by the class of 1878. Michael invites people to stop in and see him. Call first (545-0111), and he will give you a tour of the historic UMass archives.

For nursing graduate Judith Benvenutti, it's all a matter of degrees

Dr. Judith Benvenutti graduated from the nursing program in 1970, and has been accumulating degrees ever since. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Massachusetts, where she received a bachelor's degree in nursing and public health in 1975. Benvenutti holds two master's degrees from Tulane University, one in public health and the other in tropical medicine. In addition to the her bachelor's and two master's degrees, she holds three Ph.D.'s from the University of Mississippi. The first is in research and statistics, the second in educational administration and the third in andragogy, the science about how adults learn.

Benvenutti says she learned self-motivation, the value of hard work, persistence, patience and supportive relationships at GCC. One nursing instructor in particular, Charlotte Schriefgeiser, instilled in her the notion that 'the only limitation is your imagination.' "GCC gave me a strong foundation for life and living," Judith says.

She has held a variety of nursing positions, including one in the jungles of Honduras. Today she owns her own marketing and professional continuing education company and also teaches nursing. She makes her home in Long Beach, Mississippi.



Sandra Staub

Assistant District Attorney Sandra Staub heads domestic violence unit

Sandra Staub, a dean's list student who graduated from GCC in 1984, transferred to Amherst College. After earning her bachelor's degree there in 1985 she attended Yale Law School, where she was senior editor of *The Law Journal*, graduating in 1989.

She is currently an Assistant District Attorney for the Northwestern District serving both Franklin and Hampshire Counties. Staub is the director of the Domestic Violence Unit in the Northwestern District and is responsible for prosecuting many of those cases. As director, she devotes many hours organizing support groups for the victims of domestic violence.

Sandra's husband, Joe Lada, is also a GCC graduate, and they have a daughter, Billie, born in September.

—Compiled by Jodi Dwyer

We want to hear from you!

Send us news of your professional and personal achievements for the next issue of GCCNews.

Name: _____ Year enrolled at GCC: _____ Major: _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____ Phone number: _____

News: _____

Send to: Alumni Office, GCC, 1 College Dr., Greenfield MA 01301